office (the office will be formed into three divisions by two ranges of columns), and other arrangements are being made to render it fire-proof. It was, therefore, the more surprising to see the walls over openings depending, in several cases, wholly on wood lintels, without discharging arches, so that, in the event of fire, all the other precautions might be rendered unavailing.

One of the most successful specimens of polychromatic decoration in Manchester is the interior of the Catholic Church in Mulberry-street, erected on the site of a former edifice. Messrs. Weightman and Hadfield were the architects. The building itself consists of nave and aisles, of more diminutive length than was desired, and a recess or chancel at the end. The style may be described as one variety of Romanesque, displaying a fanciful arrangement of materials, which are brick and stone, the walls being of red colour, and the arch-headed windows having alternate white and black *voussoirs*. The door is a fine one, with arched head, and bas-relief in the tympanum: it has a bold roll ornament. The tower, which is at the angle, is terminated by four gables, from which rises a short spire covered with slate, this part of the building having a general resemblance to the tower of Sompting Church, Sussex, a well known example, and to some towers in Germany, which, however interesting they may be as examples, should serve for scarcely more than suggestions, it would appear to us, were it not the habit of architects to forget their chief vocation as artists. Internally the church is divided into nave and aisles by semicircular arches and columns, with capitals of Romanesque character, and has little other sculptured enrichment. But the more especial reason of our noticing this church is the character of the decoration. This part of the design is, we believe, to be attributed to Mr. Bulmer. The columns are painted a sage drab colour, and their capitals are picked out in positive colour and gold. The arches have an ornamental pattern in subdued colour, round them on the surface of the wall, and their soffits have panels painted, containing inscriptions. The arch-headed clerestory windows are filled with stained glass, of appropriate character, and have an ornamental pattern painted on the face of the wall. The use of positive colour is mainly observable over the altar, which has an arcade below, filled with diaper work and sacred emblems and monograms, and above are figures painted with considerable ability, on gold grounds. The roof shows the timbers, which are painted, and decorated with ornament, and the ceiling is blue and powdered with stars. The whole is cleverly conceived and executed, and is a manifest advance upon some former attempts, where, as we have often pointed out, the effect of the members of the architecture and beauty of form are sacrificed for mere colour.

Another successful specimen of decoration, but of a different kind, has been produced in the club rooms, in Mosley-street. With a comparatively limited amount, and little attempt at display, Mr. Walters has afforded us the opportunity of less qualified commendation than we are usually able to give. Of the committee, too, we must say, that we are so often compelled to notice the injurious result of dispensing with the assistance of an architect, just where he is most needed, that we give them [illegible] ing Mr. Walters full power in [illegible] which are usually consigned [illegible] upholsterer. The building is one of the class once known as "Grecian," and need not be particularly described. Internally there were cornices, much like those of an exterior, and giving the rooms a very heavy appearance. These it has not been convenient to remove, but the ornament has been picked out with light warm colour, and a pleasing effect otherwise gained by painting a Vitruvian scroll, or other ornament, upon the face of the corona, and lines upon the ceiling. The doors have been surmounted by low pediments, original in design, but of Greek character, and are grained oak, some of the mouldings being gilded. In the library, the dark blue cushions have a very pleasing effect, and in the mere selection of patterns for the curtains, something of that consideration for general effect is indicated, without which, in such points of detail, the whole previous labour of the architect may be made abortive. Altogether we are glad to have the opportunity of mentioning these decorations, if only because they evince coincidence with our own views, given on several occasions, not only as to the importance of making use of professional assistance in such matters, but as regards the principles of decoration which should be observed. The dining room at this club has yet to be undertaken, and will afford an excellent opportunity. We ought to mention that the graining, by Froggatt, of Manchester, is remarkably good.

We went with some degree of interest to examine a Greek Church now building on the north side of the town, hoping to find evidence that "something of the spirit of old Greece" was still lingering about those modern Hellenes who crowd the public places of an English city. Alas! alas! There was a semicircular absis, and a floor elevated at the altar end, but nothing that could remind us that we were examining a work with which any one but a very ignorant or careless builder had to do. Ancient Greece made the people of the wide world her debtors; modern Greece scarcely less diffused the knowledge of arts and letters over Europe.—Of the modern influence, we might have hoped something would be developed, even in a building in carcase: we saw nothing in the way of decoration but a façade —apparently an after-thought—tacked on to the main structure, in preparation for stucco—which the people of Manchester have almost rejected—and of very common-place character.

Constructively, also,—what a comparison! The temples of old Greece, which time, and war, and wanton mischief, and *dilettanti* ardour have conspired to destroy, still stand, in at least sufficient integrity to disclose their original design and construction. The descendants of that very race whose pride it was to carry the arts of Greece to other countries, and there surpass the achievements of Greece itself, raise a church which shews some signs of not lasting till the time of its completion. What *were* the Grecian colonists of Ionia, of Magna Græcia,—what *are* the Greeks of Manchester? What their forefathers were, their architecture tells us; what they are, will they allow us to take this building as evidence?

The building is an exception to the general good construction we have noticed. The façade, which, we said, may have been built subsequent to the flank walls, appears to be curling off from the remainder of the building: a very inadequate iron girder supporting a wall, when we saw it, was shored up in the middle: very diminutive iron columns, supporting considerable weights, and which seemed to us to have already gone out of the perpendicular, were standing in deep holes full of water, although, as concrete is usually dispensed with in Manchester, extra caution should have been observed. External and cross walls are settling with large cracks in the latter, and one flank wall we saw shored up with planks, which were bending with the pressure,—good construction being usually so well attended to in Manchester, that builders there have little opportunity to familiarise themselves with the proper arrangement of shoring. Having felt called upon to notice the general prevalence of good construction, we have thought it equally requisite to particularise a case which would be disgraceful in any town.

From the Greek place of worship we went to the Cathedral,—but we will not treat the Mother Church so ill as to put her into the fag end of an article.

## THE STORY OF BUILDING.*

If some keen disputant were to insist upon it being an odd circumstance that men should choose for their great material for building, of all things in the world, *stones* (as we have seen), the question might seem hard of settlement for a while. Certain it is, that stones were the choice of the very Antediluvians of the art, the choice no less of every age and school of building since, and are still at the present day the choice, and likely to continue so for ever. And at the same time stones seem at first sight a singular thing to fix upon, unquestionably: one would think there must be surely many things to choose from besides this; many smooth and elegant things before this most obdurate and rude,—many soft and warm and comfortable things to prefer to cold and ungenerous stones.

Yet, nevertheless, except it be brick (which is but an artificial stone), or unless the wonderful invention of which we now hear should give us undreamt-of powers to melt stone down and mould it a new material,—or, lastly, except something original should arise out of the cement practice of the present day, there seems nothing to supplant the old and simple plan of stones piled on stones. For common habitations of a day, there may be the tent of cloth in the desert till the wind has blown it away, or the shanty of boards in the tropics till the sun and the rain have twisted it into ruin, or the log hut in the far west till the tongue of damp decay has quickly rotted it, or our own lath and plaster refinement of the old wattle-work and mud, till the bitter wet of this cold November has soaked through its flimsy walls; but for an enduring structure, in whatever climate or whatever age, or for whatever end or use, we have adopted always (and the reason is now more apparent) stone. And this, the material of architecture in the first era of the art, is the material which we have chiefly to note in all succeeding periods.

When the historian of architecture leaps over nearly a thousand years, from the Egyptians to the Greeks, and steps from the Romans of the first or second century to the church-builders of the twelfth, it does not arise, at any rate in the first case, from what in other histories would indicate at least an un-historian-like absence of precision. The intervening space is simply a dreary desert or unproductive sea,—a lapse of centuries when the genius of the world was under a cloud. Now-a-days, and for many ages bygone, if the star of progress has set here, it has risen there; and the world itself and manhood still move onward, if not in this quarter, in the other, if not by Italy and Spain, by England and America. But in the early ages of which we have been speaking, the world, now all a garden, was all a waste; and the sunshine which now imparts, if a changing, still a continuous vigour, could then only at distant intervals enkindle in the wilderness a short-enduring oasis of life. Now architecture (the practice of great and embellished building) marks, by its existence, a certain definite stage of intellect and national advancement, which all countries of reputation come up to now, but which was far beyond the

* See p. 493, *ante*.

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